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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the issue of aesthetic response in relation to both literature and painting. Although "spectator theory" crops up in various forms in accounts of what happens when one reads stories or looks at pictures, the original intention of accommodating both under a single theory proved too complex. The paper, therefore, is confined to the visual arts. Nonetheless, English teachers who are familiar with the notion of the spectator role in reading in D. W. Harding's theoretical work, and writing in J. N. Britton's classroom studies will recognize the connections between reading, writing and viewing that are implied here. Other correspondences in contemporary literary and visual theory also are hinted at, not least in references to the work of Gombrich and Iser, and in the notion of "stance," which owes something to Rosenblatt, and with which the paper begins. Contains 21 references. (EH)

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CENTRE FOR LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION
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OCCASIONAL PAPERS, 30

THE SELF-CONSCIOUS SPECTATOR

MICHAEL BENTON

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FOREWORD

This paper takes up an issue I raised in Chapter Nine of my book *Secondary Worlds : Literature Teaching and the Visual Arts*, Open University Press, 1992, where I needed to consider the idea of aesthetic response in relation to both literature and painting. Although "spectator theory" crops up in various forms in accounts of what happens when we read stories or look at pictures, my original intention here of accommodating both under a single theory proved too complex and I decided, therefore, to confine myself to the visual arts. Nonetheless, English teachers who are familiar with the notion of the spectator role in reading in D.W. Harding's theoretical work, and writing in J.N. Britton's classroom studies, will recognise the connections between reading, writing and viewing that are implied here. Other correspondences in contemporary literary and visual theory are also hinted at, not least in references to the work of Gombrich and Iser, and in the notion of "stance", which owes something to Rosenblatt, and with which the paper begins.

THE SELF-CONSCIOUS SPECTATOR

The Viewer's Stance

Play with prepositions is the resort of those who would describe what happens between viewer and painting. Looking at, looking in, looking into, seeing-as, seeing-in, are all familiar phrases in the titles and texts of recent theorists. Prepositions, as they are generically designed to do, situate the viewer somewhere in relation to the object of attention. Moreover, the term "viewer" does not grant the onlooker a neutral persona: it may be modified by "implied" or, more notably, transmuted into the "beholder"[1] or the "spectator"[2]. Both terms colour the position, the one with a suggestion of reverence, the other with the sense of looking on at ordinary events. Thus, whatever the preferred vocabulary for viewing paintings, the basic concept of stance is rendered elusive and obscured by accretions of meaning from other areas of experience. Despite the variety of terms in current use, this paper neither insists upon a single epithet nor invents a new coinage of its own: the term "viewer" is regarded as having the most general and least encumbered meaning (corresponding to "reader" in literature), whereas "spectator" is used to indicate a particular role that the viewer takes on. The paper seeks to clarify the notion of viewer stance and to explore aspects of visual understanding that follow from it. Viewer stance is a problematic idea since it not only describes a position adopted in relation to a picture but it also implies creative engagement with the picture. Initially, however, we need to establish the viewer *in situ* before the painting and to consider the experience that he or she is offered.

Collinson[3] puts herself engagingly into the spectator role and invents a typical thought-track as a way of disentangling the elements that go to make up the aesthetic

experience of viewing paintings. She concludes

> Perhaps aesthetic experience is even better typified by the gaps between 'the ordinary spectator's' phrases; by the wordless moments when the spectator is poised in the act simply of apprehending the painting rather than when remarking on it. Indeed, if we think back to the remark 'Ah, that sunlit field', it is the 'Ah' more than 'that sunlit field' that reveals the sensuous immediacy of the aesthetic moment. For it is not an experience in which we formulate an intellectual judgement to the effect *that* a vision of a sunlit field has been wondrously depicted. Rather, we experience the vision for ourselves; we are admitted to the painter's point of view. It is a distinguishing mark of aesthetic experience that it is one of participating in, or inhabiting, the world of the picture. Most of the comments or remarks indicative of the experience are retrospective in that they are *about* it rather than part *of* it.

This account focusses us upon "the sensuous immediacy of the aesthetic moment", upon the spectator as an "insider", lost in a painting (as in a book) in the sense of becoming absorbed *for a time* in the "world" that is to be explored. But absorption is a variable quality of attention, not a stable state; the viewer can only recognise it by being self-consciously aware of its opposite - of standing back in relative detachment, maybe to analyse and comment. Just what happens in these moments of viewing is the puzzle. Formulations vary (see Fig 1, below) but the essential dualism between an aspect of aesthetic response located in the primary world we all share (the materiality of the painting) complemented by an aspect located in the secondary world of individual imagination (the artistic illusion) is common to all such accounts. The relationship between the two elements remains debatable in respect of their importance, precedence or simultaneity; what is less contentious is that the problem only exists because we are aware of two aspects of our viewing. We are defined, when standing before a painting, as self-conscious spectators.

By describing such perceptual activity as self-conscious I do not imply the modern meaning of being unduly aware of

oneself as an object of attention, but rather the original sense of "having consciousness of one's identity, actions, sensations ..... [of being] reflectively aware ..... of action, thought, etc." (Oxford Universal Dictionary). The former describes an aspect of social behaviour; the latter constitutes an element of self-knowledge. This reflexive self-consciousness is a useful concept in holding together the variety of descriptions and diverse terms that critics have employed in their attempts to capture what happens when we engage with a work of art, for it focusses both upon the object of contemplation and upon the subjective reaction. The self-conscious look entails a contraplex process. It cannot look outward at a painting without an accompanying sense of the response evoked within; it cannot look inward without the awareness of the object out there as its catalyst.

Armed with this notion of reflexive self-consciousness, my particular purposes are to examine some of the main positions that have been adopted on the inherent dualism of aesthetic response through a scrutiny of their preferred vocabulary and definitions; and to reconsider the concept of "aesthetic distance"[4] as a continuum, to explain how the mind does two things at once during the process of viewing. These considerations lead to a critical appraisal of Wollheim's notion of "the spectator in the picture" and to a discussion of the viewer's awareness of occupying a pre-fabricated narrative stance as the principal way in which he or she is implicated in this dualistic activity.

(Un)divided Attention

In the course of a well-known discussion of whether we can "attend twice at once", Ryle[5] comments:

> "The fact that we speak of undivided attention suggests that the division of attention is a possibility, though some people would describe the division of attention as a rapid to-and-fro switch of attention rather than as a synchronous distribution of it."

Subsequent debates of this dualism in the visual arts have reflected both descriptions. Indeed, Wollheim[6] has acknowledged that he has adopted both positions at different times. For clarity's sake, the three main contributions to the debate - those of Gombrich (1960), Wollheim (1987), and Podro (1991) - can be presented in tabular form (Fig. 1), together with those of two others - Clark (1960) and Koestler (1964) - whose comments help to illuminate the point in the context of their writings on other issues. All the terminology is direct quotation.

	CONCEPT	MEDIUM	VIRTUAL SUBJECT
CLARK	transformation	salad of brush strokes	illusion
KOESTLER	bisociation	medium	motif
GOMBRICH	guided projection	mosaic of strokes and dabs on the canvas	illusion
WOLLHEIM	twofoldness	marked surface	depicted subject
PODRO	disegno	material procedure	represented subject

Fig. 1. The vocabulary of visual perception.

The five concepts vary in their degree of technicality but all are attempts to explain the experience of viewing representational painting within the general framework of the psychology of perception. They focus upon "the aesthetic moment" - or, maybe, a series of such moments, as will be suggested presently - when the spectator's self-conscious evocation of the painting consists of a double

vision of the virtual subject and of the medium in which it is portrayed. Articulating the experience of this double vision labours under a double handicap. As Clark[7] commments: "..... quite apart from the shortcomings of perception, there is the difficulty of turning visual experience into language". Yet, it was his account of his attempts to "stalk" Velasquez's *Las Meninas* that initiated the renewed debate. He described his experiments in trying to discover how the illusion was effected as follows:[8]

> "I would start from as far away as I could, when the illusion was complete, and come gradually nearer, until suddenly what had been a hand, and a ribbon, and a piece of velvet, dissolved into a salad of brushstrokes. I thought I might learn something if I could catch the moment at which this transformation took place, but it proved to be as elusive as the moment between waking and sleeping."

Clark's final remark suggests that in looking for a single moment we may be seeking the wrong solution; what in fact he describes is a transformational process - a series of moments during which the emphases of our perception change. Nonetheless, this has not deterred others from trying to pin-point this phenomenon.

Koestler's [9] theory of bisociation is one that seeks to account for all creative activity. It distinguishes between the single-minded routine skills of everyday thinking, and creative thinking which is described as "a double-minded, transitory state of unstable equilibrium where the balance of both emotion and thought is disturbed". When he comes to discuss painting[10], Koestler's dualism is conveyed through the terms 'medium' and 'motif'. He reminds us of the familiar point that "the impact (of a painting) does not take place on the canvas, but in the artist's mind, and in the beholder's mind". Because of the "limitations of the medium" and "the prejudices of vision" the painter is forced to cheat and the viewer is forced into complicity:

> "The way he (the painter) cheats, the tricks he uses, are partly determined by the requirements of the

> medium itself - he must think 'in terms of' stone, wood, pigment, or gouache - but mainly by the idiosyncrasies of his vision: the codes which govern the matrices of his perception. Whether Manet's impression of *The Races of Longchamp* looks more 'life-like' than Frith's academically meticulous *Derby Day* depends entirely on the beholder's spectacles. An artist can copy in plaster, up to a point, a Roman copy of a Greek bronze head; he cannot 'copy' on canvas a running horse. He can only create an appearance which, seen in a certain light, at a certain distance, in a certain mood, will suddenly acquire a life of its own. It is not a copy, but a metaphor. The horse was not a *model*, but a *motif* for his creation - in the sense in which a landscape painter looks for a romantic or pastoral motif.[11]

Koestler is not as explicit about the operation of the split-mindedness of medium and motif in painting as he had been earlier when discussing verbal creation. There he affirms that artistic illusion is "the simultaneous presence and interaction in the mind of two universes, one real, one imaginary."[12] He conceives of the aesthetic experience as "depending on that delicate balance arising from the presence of *both* matrices in the mind; on perceiving the hero as Laurence Olivier and Prince Hamlet of Denmark at one and the same time; on the lightning oscillations of attention from one to the other .....".[13] Where painting is concerned he places less emphasis upon simultaneity and more upon the viewer's awareness of artistic convention[14] and what he refers to at one point as "the various bisociative, or bi-focal, processes"[15] of looking at paintings. Bi-focalism, in fact, is a useful term in that it suggests both a near focus and a more distant one in combination, and the necessary and rapid movement between the two.

Gombrich's concept of "guided projection" as a means of explaining the viewer's perceptual process takes Clark's transformation further by stressing the virtuality of the image in a way that is consistent with the bi-focalism suggested by Koestler. For Gombrich has continued to maintain that it is literally inconceivable for the viewer

to focus at the same time both upon the illusion and the "strokes and dabs on the canvas" that produce it. If visual perception entails experiencing the virtual presence of the image while the material painting remains on the gallery wall, how can one's attention to both be anything but divided? Simultaneity between the scene seen and the actual surface is a psychological impossibility. Here is how Gombrich, speaking of impressionist painting, describes what happens to the viewer:[16]

> .... the beholder must mobilize his memory of the visible world and project it into the mosaic of strokes and dabs on the canvas before him. It is here, therefore, that the principle of guided projection reaches its climax. The image, it might be said, has no firm anchorage left on the canvas.... it is only 'conjured up' in our minds. The willing beholder responds to the artist's suggestion because he enjoys the transformation that occurs in front of his eyes.... The artist gives the beholder increasingly 'more to do', he draws him into the magic circle of creation and allows him to experience something of the thrill of 'making' ....

There is a lot of action here: mobilization, projection, transformation, 'more to do', 'making' - the viewer's perceptual activity loosens an image from the canvas and fastens it in imagination. Both *exist* simultaneously in their separate states for the duration of the viewing, but we cannot *attend* to both simultaneously. We switch between the two, yet each needs the other for the aesthetic experience to be sustained. Mobility between the "conceptual image" and the actual picture is the key: the image requires constant feeding from the canvas; the canvas required the viewer's continuous effort of attention if it is to be more than an object on a gallery wall.

Gombrich[17] has not helped his argument against simultaneity and for alternating attention by basing his case on the well-known figure-ground reversals. It is one thing to switch between the duck and the rabbit in a composite image drawn in pencil and reproduced on the printed page, and quite another to switch between the scene and the surface of a painting in a gallery. Gombrich's

main opponent in this argument is Wollheim[18] who insists upon the unitary nature of "twofoldness" as being fundamental to visual competence: surface and scene are essentially part of the same phenomenon of aesthetic viewing. Yet, while it is easy to counter Gombrich's reliance upon figure-ground reversals because they comprise two homogeneous images; rather than the heterogeneity of surface and scene, it is unconvincing in the light of common experience to wrap up both aspects in a single enclosing concept which ignores the mobility of imaginative participation and the variability of attention that the viewer customarily exhibits before a work of art.

Wollheim is explicit that his foundational concept of "seeing-in" is a "distinct kind of perception", suggesting that it is biologically grounded and that young children use it in their learning about the world[19]. To see-in is to have a dual-aspect yet unitary experience in response to a painting. It is unitary in that the viewer's absorption in the image is inclusive of two features: the viewer sees both the "depicted subject" and yet also sees the "marked surface" as evidenced in, say, the brush strokes, the density of the texture, the cracks in the paint, and so on. Wollheim argues that these are

> ".... two aspects of a single experience, they are not two experiences. They are neither two separate simultaneous experiences, which I somehow hold in the mind at once, nor two separate alternating experiences, between which I oscillate...."[20]

These two aspects of viewing are thus distinguishable yet inseparable and captured in the concept of "twofoldness". He calls the two complementary aspects of seeing-in the *recognitional aspect*, where the spectator discerns something *in* the marked surface, and the *configurational aspect*, which indicates the spectator's awareness *of* the marked surface *per se*. Both aspects of this twofoldness operate in the spectator together, and it is this simultaneous awareness of 'a depicted subject' and 'the

marked surface' which ensures that the framed scene registers both in depth and as flat.

Even though Wollheim avoids the difficulty of divided attention inherent in Koestler's and Gombrich's accounts, his two-in-one combination produces a synthetic concept without telling us anything about its *modus operandi*. As Martin Kelly [21] has pointed out, Wollheim does not elaborate on the 'in' that he attaches to 'seeing' other than to say that figures are seen in a marked surface. Prepositions, as suggested at the outset, locate the viewing experience, and may, as here, indicate its salient features, but they say little about it as a dynamic process. For some insights into this we must turn to the last of the five formulations.

In his paper "Depiction and The Golden Calf", Podro[22] borrows a term from Vasari and develops what he calls "the *disegno* thesis - the thesis that we follow the formulating as a way of perceiving what is represented" (p. 185). His paper is concerned with a sense of abstraction which he elaborates as

> ".... the sense in which the painting selects from, connects and reconstructs the subject *in* the medium and procedures of painting; and, because these things are indissolubly connected, it is concerned with the way that the drawing or painting directs itself to the mind of the perceiver, who sees the subject remade within it, sees a new *world* which exists only in painting and can be seen only by the spectator who attends to the *procedures* of painting."[23] (my italics).

The key words here are 'in', 'world', and 'procedures', for they take us on from Wollheim's 'seeing-in' to theorise what the 'in' implies. This is formulated in terms of a virtual world which, in turn, is sustained by the way the viewer's attention is undivided in that subject and medium interpenetrate each other in the viewer's awareness of the procedures of painting.

In his discussion of "how we see the painting procedure in the subject as well as the subject in the painting procedure", the notion of the 'marked surface' is problematic. Podro comments:

> "To talk of our sense of the surface may appear to be returning to the notion that attention to surface and attention to represented subject compete or are reciprocally independent, while in our account we assume the opposite."[24]

He overcomes this difficulty by conceiving of the painted surface in two different ways which he terms, at different points in his paper, "material precondition" (p. 170) and "material procedure" (p. 185). The first describes the material precondition of depiction - our scrutiny of the surface to recognise the look of figures, flowers and so on. The second requires us to conceive of the surface as itself having an appearance, one which interplays with the look of the represented subject. He takes issue with Wollheim's account of representation on the basis that it implies that in following the fiction of what is represented we become indifferent to the real properties of the object, thus giving "a logically secondary place to observing the material procedure of painting and that procedure's relation to the depicted subject". He concludes: "we should be seeing the material as a representational medium, under the concept of depiction".[25]

The third key word identified above is 'world'. When Podro asks: "how do we, the spectators, *use* .... the interpenetration of the painting's real presence and the projected or imagined world?", he frames his answer by saying that:

> ".... the subject becomes directed to us and we to it by both of us participating in a new kind of world, a world in which the relation between the spectator and the subject is mediated by the art and procedure of painting; it requires a particular kind of attentiveness on our part and reveals the subject as it can be seen only in painting".[26]

The notion of "the world in the head" is, perhaps, the commonest of all metaphors to describe mental activity and has particular appeal in the area of aesthetic experience. In recent years it has been developed from many standpoints, notably in reading theory[27], in psychological enquiry [28], and in philosophical discourse[29]. In the arts, Tolkien's[30] coinage of "a secondary world" has found a special resonance and has been elaborated by Auden[31] and Benton[32]. As a metaphor for perceptual activity it is a useful indicator of the virtual power that imaginative engagement with a work of art can generate; but, used on its own, it takes us little further in understanding the actual process of that engagement. Podro's *disegno* thesis provides one explanation through its discussion of the "material procedures" available in the art-work. A complementary account is to explain this process of engagement through the mental procedures inherent in the viewer's response. To do this, we need to reconsider the concept of aesthetic distance.

Kris[33] has argued that genuine aesthetic response takes place only when, in the mind of the viewer of a painting, there occur shifts of *psychic level* and *psychic distance*. The idea is of the mind in continuous movement between these two interlocking axes: "level" conveys the constant interplay between the conscious and unconscious, the controlled and regressive elements; "distance" catches the continuous fluctuation in the degree of involvement with an art object. Clearly, both dimensions are intimately related and suggest fundamental elements in the perceptual activities of the self-conscious spectator; it is the dimension of "distance", however, that is most useful in helping to conceptualise how the secondary world is experienced by painters and viewers. Both undergo phases of relative absorption with and detachment from the depiction. Painters' makings of their secondary worlds entail some periods of intense absorption during which they

seem a part of the very world they are creating; at other times their role, physically and mentally, may be to stand back, to put some distance between themselves and the 'world' they are shaping and, consequentially, to become more aware of the materials with which they are working. For the viewers, too, the onlooker role is not constant. Their spectatorship will vary in the intensity of its commitment and attention at different phases of the viewing process. (Clark[34] hints at this in his account of his customary pattern - impact, scrutiny, recollection and renewal.). The axis of psychic distance expresses our sense of relationship with the depiction; it acknowledges that our sense of scene and materiality is in a state of continuous change; and it indicates the horizons beyond which the secondary world ceases to exist. For if involvement becomes obsessive and takes on psychotic characteristics, it leads to hallucination. (Koestler's theory of bisociation gives a plausible account of how the mind protects itself from this extreme). Conversely, if the sense of detachment from the secondary world is taken to the limit, it is but a short distance before painters or viewers become disengaged and the process of depicting or viewing is suspended. At the extreme, the work may be abandoned by the artist, or a painting may be deemed incomprehensible by the viewer.

What does the reconsideration of this notion of distance achieve? Essentially, it restores mobility to the process of visual response by means of a continuum. The viewer's attention is itself best viewed neither as divided nor undivided but as constantly moving, enabling a range of responses to be generated, some simultaneously, some successively, as the eye perceives and the brain constructs. Spectatorship is not a stable state but the adoption of a continuously shifting viewpoint - a concept that has been developed in relation to literature by Iser[35] and which, both there in respect of fiction and here with

reference to painting, denotes not arbitrary movements but ones regulated by an awareness of the qualities of the object of attention. This, in turn, suggests that there is an "implied viewer"[36] (to adapt a term from literary theory) constructed within the painting whose stance is pre-determined and whose viewing experience is partly orchestrated by the form and medium of the painting. As he or she is drawn into the secondary world the self-conscious spectator looks around, as it were, fully aware that the engagement with the painting has both determined and undetermined elements. What the spectator brings to this experience clearly matters, but the basic schema for the viewing process is laid down in the painting. The painting contains its own directions as to how it should be viewed; the self-conscious spectator knows this.

Looking Around

Another preposition has now appeared. Adopting the metaphor of the secondary world invites us to speak of the spectator looking *around* this creation. Looking around describes the spectator's imaginative participation and suggests the pleasures of exploration and discovery that are commonly felt before a painting in those moments that Collinson characterises as "sensuous immediacy". Yet such participation is not a licence to roam without restraint. The self-conscious spectator knows the rules governing the process, the main one of which is that looking around can only be conducted from a vantage point predetermined in the painting. In this sense the painter makes the viewer in the course of making the depicted subject: the viewer is pre-positioned not only in self-evident ways that control the angle of gaze and the sense of distance from the depicted subject, but through less obvious means that decide the amount and nature of the work needed to fill out the indeterminacies of the picture's "incomplete images"[37] in Gombrich's phrase.

If we draw on the idea of reflexive self-consciousness again and ask what sort of activities pertain in this viewer-object relationship, the answer can most plausibly be framed in terms of the responses of the viewer constructed in the painting. This "implied viewer" is what Wollheim[38] appears to be after in his distinction between the "spectator of the picture" and the "spectator in the picture". The external spectator is located in the actual space the painting occupies in the gallery; the internal spectator is located in the virtual space the painting represents. Wollheim's subsequent discussion of Manet's portraits speaks of this interior persona as a "mobile spectator" and "the peripatetic spectator in the picture" (p. 161), recalling Iser's[39] concept of "the wandering viewpoint" that the reader of fiction experiences during absorption in the world of a novel. When he describes the actual process of viewing, however, Wollheim is considerably more mechanistic than words like "mobile", "peripatetic" or "wandering" suggest. He outlines the process as follows:

> "The function of the spectator in the picture is that he allows the spectator of the picture a distinctive access to the content of the picture.
>
> This access is achieved in the following way: First, the external spectator looks at the picture and sees what there is to be seen in it; then adopting the internal spectator as his protagonist, he starts to imagine in that person's perspective the person or event that the picture represents; that is to say, he imagines from the inside the internal spectator seeing, thinking about, responding to, acting upon, what is before him; then the condition in which this leaves him modifies how he sees the picture. The external spectator identifies with the internal spectator, and it is through this identification that he gains fresh access to the picture's content."[40]

As a way of describing our engagement with a painting, Wollheim's account has the virtue of capturing that sense of an inside viewpoint within a reflexive, self-conscious experience; but the specificity of the stages - of

looking, of adopting a role, of starting to imagine and so on - seems over-prescriptive. Our engagement with paintings is unlikely to be susceptible to such a strictly delimited procedure. While this account may accurately describe Wollheim's own habitual process of viewing (cf. Clark's customary pattern, noted above), it is unlikely that the "access to the picture's content" that he speaks of is achieved in the same way by everyone else. Moreover, apart from this suspiciously neat sequence of stages, it is not at all clear what Wollheim means by "identification". As a word to bring together his two types of spectator, it is as open to criticism as when used to describe the relationship between a reader and a character in fiction, as D.W. Harding[41] memorably demonstrated. Wollheim seems to suggest that, following the suspension of disbelief, an imaginative role-play takes place which leads to a degree of empathic insight. Whether such an experience can be aptly described as identification is uncertain. Either way, Wollheim develops his spectator theory in words that tacitly acknowledge that disbelief is suspended, as Coleridge states, only "for the moment"[42]. Wollheim continues:

> ".... once the spectator of the picture accepts the invitation to identify with the spectator in the picture, he loses sight of the marked surface. In the represented space, where he now vicariously stands, there is no marked surface. Accordingly, the task of the artist must be to recall the spectator to a sense of what he has temporarily lost. The spectator must be returned from imagination to perception: twofoldness must be reactivated. Otherwise the distinctive resources of the medium will lie untapped."[43]

Absorption is temporary, variable, unstable. Sooner or later the mind becomes more alert to the marked surface and, consequently, less alert to the invented world depicted in it. Moments later, the viewer may become reabsorbed, and so continue to shuttle to and fro in what was termed above "the dimension of psychic distance", experiencing varying degrees of involvement in and

detachment from the represented world and varying degrees of critical or analytical insight into the ways in which the work is constituted.

It follows from the above that the stance of the implied viewer, or Wollheim's "internal spectator", is predetermined and self-consciously occupied. The self-conscious spectator's position can be defined initially as a narrative viewpoint from which the painting is to be interpreted, since the interpretation is driven by the impulse to "storying", to narrativise the representation as a way of making meaning. In this respect, Culler's remark about how we make literary meaning can also apply to the viewer's construction of visual meaning. Culler comments: "To speak of the meaning of the work is to tell a story of the reading."[11] For the viewer, such stories are regulated by the angle of gaze the picture dictates, and then in more subtle and mobile ways by the form and medium of the representation.

The process of implicating the viewer begins with the establishment of this viewpoint, situating the viewer as, say, a play-goer in the stalls who observes the eye-level scenes of Hogarth's *Marriage à la Mode*, or as a voyeur in the street who observes characters through the windows of lighted rooms in Hopper's *Nighthawks* or *Automat*, or, ambiguously, as Suzon's customer in Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*. Most paintings designate stance less explicitly than these examples but all pre-define the position from which they are to be viewed: the self-conscious spectator soon becomes aware of how his or her angle on the depiction is being manipulated.

The process of implicating the spectator commonly develops as a growing awareness that one's attention is orchestrated by the lines, the spaces, the disposition of colours, the nature of materials used and so on that

constitute the form and medium of the painting. The spectator may be drawn in by the looks, gestures and body language of represented figures or the way the paint has been applied to the canvas. Viewing instructions are inscribed in the form and materials of paintings, literally, wherever we look. Again, to cite well-known examples which are easily brought to mind, the spectator's responses to Turner's dramatic *Rain, Steam and Speed* are mobilized and controlled by the wedge-shaped form and swirling colours, just as surely as they are by the short, thick, gashes of paint of a Van Gogh landscape, or by the eye-lines of the depicted figures and the focussing effect of the light in Wright of Derby's *An Experiment With An Air Pump*.

In summary, awareness of stance, form and medium are the principal ways in which the self-conscious spectator is implicated in the aesthetic experience. The "looking around" the secondary world of the painting that then becomes available is both created and controlled by these factors. The interplay between the spectator's sense of the represented subject and the medium in which it is cast is best described as a continuum since this reflects the inevitable mobility of the process and allows for greater flexibility and variety in the ways spectators operate than does the "viewing template" that Wollheim's spectator theory would place over the experience.

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